

ST. JOHN'S CHURCH, WEST TORONTO

**Open Minds.
Open Hearts.
Open Doors.
A great place to be!**



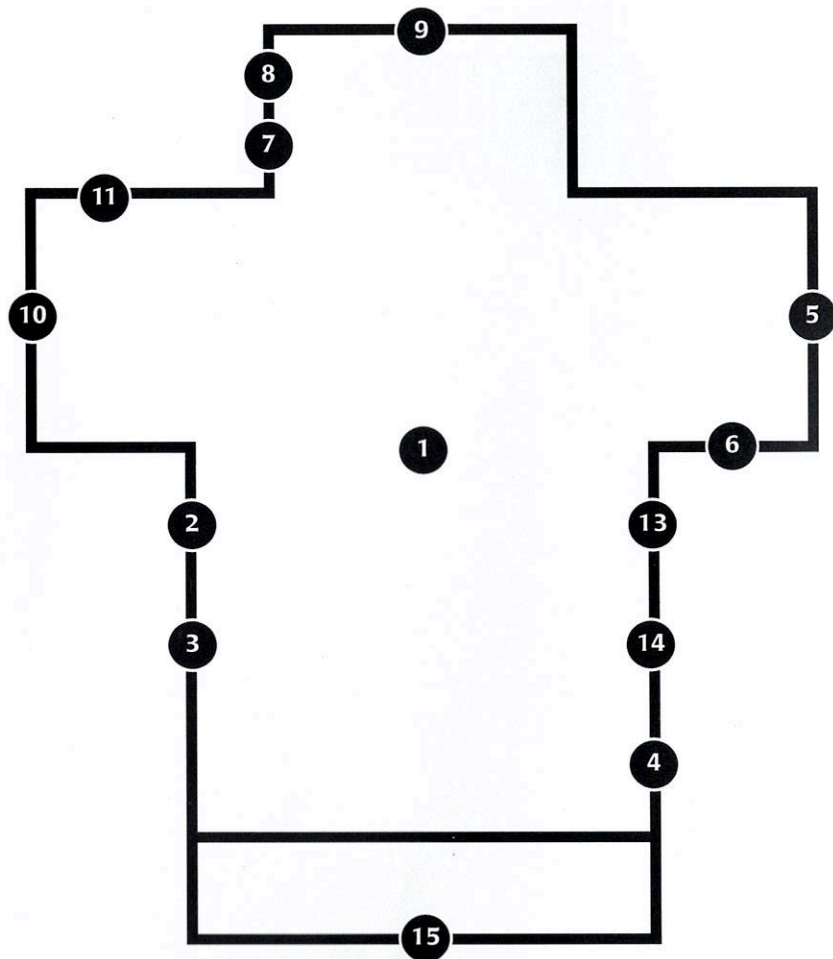
Open Doors and Open Windows



**A CONTEMPLATIVE GUIDE TO THE WINDOWS
AT ST. JOHN'S CHURCH, WEST TORONTO**



ST. JOHN'S FLOOR PLAN



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks for the involvement of many hands and hearts in producing this guide. Thanks to Evelyn Butler, Marion Karasiuk, and Nan Weston (proofreading and creative ideas), Jim Crummey and Bruce Alton (pictures), Susan Rynasko (layout), and Anthony Ruta (printing). Let any inaccuracy be my responsibility, and any good that comes from this endeavour be to the credit of the One who meets us through the windows.

Father Gary van der Meer, Parish Priest

INTRODUCTION



Behold! Have a moment of holy awe.

If you have lost yourself in a sunset or a beautiful painting, you will know what to do during your visit to St. John's. If you have followed the Stations of the Cross or walked the Labyrinth, you will be able to go through our windows to a sacred place.

Stained glass windows have long portrayed Christian faith. Windows told the story when people could neither read nor understand the language of Christian worship. These windows have been called "God's Comic Book." They have been used for teaching. They have been admired for their consistent style and portrayal of themes in the life of Jesus. We have inherited this treasure from an earlier age, from people who looked to Jesus for direction, for light to shine on their own situations, problems and hopes.

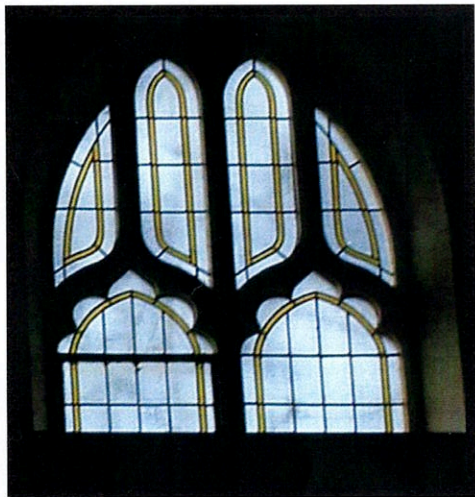
You may wish to sit and absorb, to simply be surrounded by the beauty of colour, images and stories. This guide will help you to do "the window walk" – to spend a few moments with each window, in an order designed to take you on your own personalized journey. Contemplating each window could take a few minutes. You may want to spend a longer time, if a particular window or reflection helps you to meditate on an important facet of your life or your place in the universe. Take as long as you need, or visit again. And take this guide away with you as our gift.



FIRST WINDOW



"Blank Space. Clear your mind."



Walk up the centre aisle towards the altar. Turn around and take it all in. Look back towards the main entrance, and gaze upwards, beyond the balcony to three windows of opaque white and yellow glass. To begin a time of contemplation, let the plain glass help you to clear your mind of distracting thoughts. A time of intentional contemplation may have a desired outcome or goal – in the language of the Spirit, a “grace.” The grace might be that

you notice something significant. Open yourself to the possibility that something you see in these windows will prompt you to pay attention to something in you or in your life. These windows might open a door inside you. Ask for a grace.



HISTORY AND DESIGN

The windows of St. John’s Church are a treasure, and a bit of a secret. Given as memorial gifts over the past century, they are of remarkably consistent style, and together present a composite picture of the life of Jesus. In 2002, the congregation of St. John’s agreed to a radical colour scheme for the interior of the church, to better draw attention to the windows.

Stuart Reid, the stained glass artist who selected the colours, writes of the St. John’s windows: “Most of your windows are in the typical 19th century style; deeply saturated colour, dawn or evening settings, muted green grey

borders with golden stain and black enamel to give nuanced detail to everything from inscriptions to architectural canopies. The early McCausland style is derived from the marriage of the Arts & Crafts Movement with the romantic sensibilities of the Pre-Raphaelites, made possible through the legendary teamwork of Sir Edward Burne-Jones and William Morris. These two artists set the standards for ecclesiastical stained glass in the last half of the 19th century right up to the First World War, (and in the colonies, where tastes were more conservative, for another fifty years).”

Most of the windows at St. John’s were designed in Toronto by local firms Robert McCausland and N.T. Lyon. Robert McCausland is the oldest stained glass studio in North America. It was founded in 1850 as a decorating firm under Joseph McCausland and, under continuous family ownership, has produced two thirds of all the stained glass windows in Canada. Napoleon Theodore Lyon apprenticed with McCausland during the 1880s, and then opened his own firm. Andrew McCausland writes of Lyon: “As a Roman Catholic of Irish descent, Lyon did most of the Catholic work in Toronto, whereas McCausland did most of the Protestant work.” The McCausland and Lyon windows at St. John’s are, to the unpracticed eye, quite similar to each other. They are best told apart by the skies: Skies in W.T. Lyon windows are turbulent and full of clouds, as compared to the calm skies in the McCausland windows. The McCausland windows are consistent in their use of hand blown glass imported from Europe, and in their design, with artists staying with the firm for most of their professional life. The N.T. Lyon firm was absorbed by McCausland in the 1940s.

These windows are an irreplaceable artistic endeavour and spiritual resource, and part of the heritage of the West Toronto neighbourhood.

SECOND WINDOW

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"Mary and Martha. Being and Doing."



Mary has forgotten everything else to be completely present to Jesus. The shading in Mary's face presents a carefree picture. Time has stopped for her. As she sits with Jesus, Mary knows how to "be." What circumstances help or hinder you in having such a "sacrament of the present moment?"

Martha has work to do. Martha is busy "doing" and she doesn't have enough time.

In our age, many people are more like Martha than Mary. What is the balance between "being" and "doing" in your life? How satisfied are you with the balance in your life?

The shading in Martha's face suggests emotional turmoil. As she looks on, Martha is jealous and resents Mary for having a moment at her expense. In the next moment she will express her resentment. What emotional turmoil or resentments are you carrying? Jesus protects Mary's moment as "the better part, which will not be taken away from her." How else might Martha have responded? What emotional turmoil do you carry? How do you respond? Is there better way to respond?

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HISTORY AND DESIGN

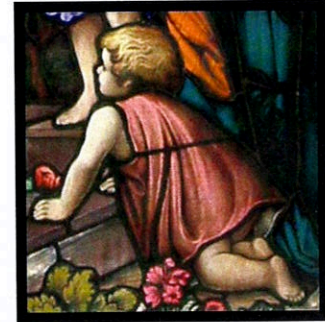
The Mary and Martha window was created by the Toronto firm N.T. Lyon. It was dedicated in 1923, soon after the new church was opened, in memory of Martha Ann Hinde, wife of Dr. R.R. Hopkins (in whose memory the window on the opposite side of the church was given). Of all the windows at St. John's, the Mary and Martha window is in greatest need of care. Notice the bulging glass and the cracked dedication pane. It has been estimated that restoration – removal of each pane for cleaning, re-leading, installation of vandal-proof thermal exterior glass, and epoxy and repainting of the exterior frame – would cost between \$7500 and \$9000. The St. John's community is beginning to undertake restoration of the windows.

THIRD WINDOW

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"Jesus and the Children. Original Innocence."

The children are safe in the presence of Jesus. Notice their relaxed postures, as Jesus argues on their behalf with adult disciples who do not see their value. We are aware of a world full of danger, far and near. What safe places do you have where you are able to go into your original innocence? Where are you valued for who you really are?



What is it about this Jesus that innocent children could feel this way around him? Is there something about him that our world is not about to give us? When you look at these children, which one could be you?

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HISTORY AND DESIGN

This window was created by N.T. Lyon, and dedicated in memory of Mary Elizabeth Cooper in 1924.

FOURTH WINDOW



"Jesus, the Infant. Original Protection."



There are so many stories of Jesus as an adult, but we remember that he also was once a child. Jesus also had an original innocence. With some adults we know, it is a surprise to remember that they were once children. Is there a part of you that is child-like?

Here we see Jesus as a special child. All eyes are focused on him. He is adored by shepherds. Notice his father's protective hand. When is the protective instinct stirred in you? When have you felt the protective instinct most recently? It is a gift to feel this way.



HISTORY AND DESIGN

The Nativity window was created by Robert McCausland. It was dedicated to the memory of St. John's long-serving pioneer, Hilda May. Miss May died on March 12, 1962. The scripture reference is, "In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths." (Proverbs 3:6)

FIFTH WINDOW

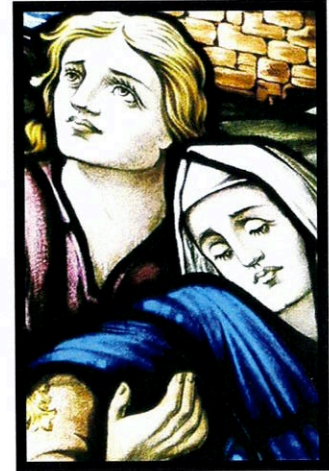


"Crucifixion. Paradox."

It is not easily understood that the crucifixion would be the end. The innocence, the boldness, the memorable words, the people he genuinely helped, how could these have led to this horrible death? As we look upon him, even if we know the story well, we may wonder why things end up the way they do. How did I end up being me?

As you look upon Jesus, the artist takes your gaze away from the suffering. To the angels and the colours. Where do your eyes go?

Notice that Jesus is not alone. He is surrounded by a crowd of witnesses. Notice the expressions on the faces of those who gaze upwards. At right, the protective disciple John, looking after Mary as his own mother. "Truly this man was God's Son," says the soldier at left. Each of them is drawing conclusions about who this person really is. You see the realization in their faces. In the intensity of not being able to understand comes the step of faith.



HISTORY AND DESIGN

The Crucifixion is presented in three windows, and was designed by the N.T. Lyon Company. Note the absence of the usual architectural tracery framing the scene, and the turbulent skies. The window was installed in 1931 to celebrate the 50th anniversary of St. John's Church. The Bula Matadi Boys' Bible Class was organized in 1895 by pioneering parishioner Hilda May. The artistic style of the 1930s is evident. The lead between the glass is not the original, but has been replaced since the window was installed.

SIXTH WINDOW



"The Boy Jesus. Focus."



This Jesus who died was once a child. Here he is in the temple. The lectern for the reading of the Torah scroll is at left. Notice the focused look in his eyes. This precocious twelve year old boy is answering and asking questions. He is focusing his total attention as he listens to the responses. Have you experienced this total attention from another person?

When have you been this focused? What was it like? What helps you to fully attend to others? Would you like to be this way again? What questions do you have?



HISTORY AND DESIGN

This window, by Robert McCausland, is very different in design and details from the previous one. It shares with it a dedication by the Bula Matadi Boys' Bible Class, this time as a memorial to members of the Bible Class who lost their lives in the Second World War. Bible Classes were an important part in the life of young Anglicans of this parish in the first half of the twentieth century, both as Christian formation and as part of their social lives. This Bible Class peculiarly takes its name from Henry Morgan Stanley, the famous 19th century explorer of Africa. Stanley was the agent for Belgium's King Leopold in the exploitation and development of the Congo Free State. "Bula Matadi" is translated as "Breakstones," but Stanley preferred the grander translation "Breaker of Rocks." He claimed it was bestowed on him by awed Africans when they saw giant boulders dynamited to build the railroad through the Crystal Mountains. Stanley's brutality and enslavement of local people was known at the time the window was installed. It may be that the sense of adventure in foreign lands appealed to the boys who named this Bible Class.

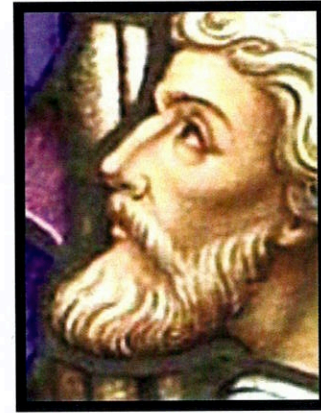
SEVENTH WINDOW



"Jesus Teaches. Setting the World Right."

The focus that Jesus had meant that he could make connections for others. He could teach. Here he gives one of his famous teaching moments, the Sermon on the Mount. The text recalls that he taught about righteousness.

What righteousness or what justice do you long for? What would our world be like if you could satisfy this hunger? How could you be part of setting the world right? What support do you need?



HISTORY AND DESIGN

This window was created by N.T. Lyon through the sponsorship of the congregation. It was dedicated on June 17, 1928, to the memory of the Most Reverend Frederick Herbert Du Vernet, who between 1895 and 1904 served as the third Rector of St. John's Church. During his tenure at St. John's, he oversaw the expansion of the second St. John's church building in 1904, to respond to the growth of the western part of the city. Du Vernet later served as Archbishop of Caledonia and Metropolitan of British Columbia, and died in 1924. Note the colour difference in the glass of the dedication, indicating a portion that was replaced.

EIGHTH WINDOW



"Fishers of Men. Fully Available."



Jesus calls these people away from their regular tasks to take on a role in setting our world right. It was so intriguing, so important, that they were able to leave other things behind. Jesus called this the "Kingdom." They were called to participate in the world in a new way.

Have you ever thought of yourself as "called" to something? How did you respond? What calling are you still working through? How were you able to leave other things behind to be fully available? What is your greatest struggle? What have you seen here that would help you turn towards something new?



HISTORY AND DESIGN

This window was created by N.T. Lyon and dedicated to the memory of the Rev. T. Beverley Smith, the fourth Rector of St. John's. Smith served St. John's from 1904 to 1917, and died in 1918. Under his leadership, St. John's engaged in "churchplanting" by beginning missions in the neighbourhood. These have since become the parishes of St. Paul's Church on Willard Avenue, and the Church of the Advent on Pritchard Avenue.

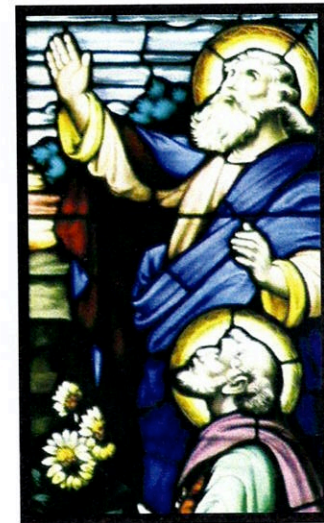
NINTH WINDOW



"The Ascension. Our Job."

These disciples look up as Jesus is glorified by God. They have been with Jesus, through his teaching and his death, but they do not yet know everything they will need to know. This was the very last of the resurrection appearances. Jesus will now be gone from our eyes. It's our job now.

As you consider the posture or facial expression of these disciples, do you relate especially to one of them? Is one of them you? This window has the greatest range of colours. Where do your eyes stay? Are you reminded of anything in yourself? What would your reaction have been?



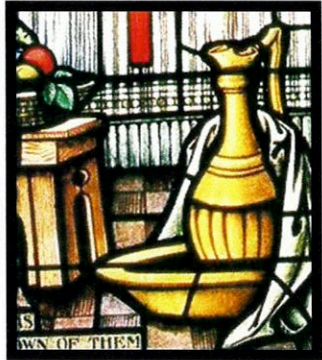
HISTORY AND DESIGN

This window was created by N.T. Lyon of Toronto, and was officially unveiled on November 11, 1923, a week after the new church was opened. It is dedicated to the memory of the 39 men from this parish that made the supreme sacrifice during World War 1. Their names are recorded on the War Memorial on the west wall. Stuart Reid writes of this window: "Of all your windows, my favourite is the "Ascension Window" at the north end of the church. The floating figure of Christ is centred against a remarkably delicate sky with green foliage to the sides, jewel-like tracery above, and anchored below by a row of disciples. The vertical hierarchy expressed in both subject and format is typical of the nineteenth century, but the reserved dignity of the drawing and the delicacy of the colour give this window a remarkably resonant harmony that is quite unique."

TENTH WINDOW

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"The Meal at Emmaus. Recognition."



Jesus joined these two disciples as they travelled to their home in Emmaus. As he walked with them, they did not recognize him. We know that the man at left is Cleopas, but the name of the disciple at right is not mentioned. The artist's portrayal encourages us to see her as his wife. Together, these two disciples came to a new awareness. Their new awareness astonished them. It was a grace.

As we look, how could they not know it was him? The awareness came with the bread they shared. As disciples have since participated in this meal, they have found themselves nourished in their own sense of having a special calling. What nourishes your sense of calling, what keeps it alive? Have you tried the bread?

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HISTORY AND DESIGN

The windows of this Robert McCausland design were given as three separate memorials. The centre window was dedicated on Easter Sunday of 1968, to the memory Samuel Ryding and Gertrude Hewitt, husband and wife. The two outer windows were plain glass until 1981, and as part of the hundredth anniversary celebrations the composition was completed. The window at left was given by Laura Renwick in thanksgiving for all the clergy of St. John's Church. The window at right was given in memory of Bishop Henry Robert Hunt, who was rector of St. John's from 1935-1949, and later served as suffragan bishop in the Diocese of Toronto. The album produced for the hundredth anniversary of St. John's notes that Hunt, "gave to his ministry a selfless devotion and an unwavering belief in the inherent goodness of man." Note that several details from this window, including the pitcher and fruit, have been copied on the Focus Table for the children's story.

ELEVENTH WINDOW

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"The Good Shepherd. Knowing you Belong."

As you look upon Jesus holding the lamb, the implication is that you are that lamb. One thing that feeds us is knowing to whom we belong. It is very nourishing to know we belong to something and someone greater than ourselves. It gives us strength and faith to work toward rightness in the world.



If you are that lamb, imagine looking out from the lamb's eyes, at yourself standing there. Who are you becoming? And as the lamb, imagine that you have turned your head to look at up at Jesus' face. What does he look like from there? How does it feel to be held by him?

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HISTORY AND DESIGN

This window, the oldest in the church, was brought from the second St. John's Church building. St. John's West Toronto served the community from its location at the corner of Dundas Street and St. John's Road from 1881 to 1923. The first building was a simple wooden structure that served the congregation for eight years. The second church building was completed in 1890, and the adjacent wooden building became the parish hall. In 1923, the church was relocated to be closer to the new homes of the developing West Toronto neighbourhood. The Good Shepherd window was created by N.T. Lyon, and dedicated in remembrance of Sarah Griffin in 1917.

TWELFTH WINDOW



"The Virgin Mary. Making a Choice."



This young woman answered yes. As a teenager, she responded with energy and willingness and gave birth to God's beloved Child. The colours are bright and strong, as if to support the direction of Mary's life.

What new gift might be born in you if you could say yes to the things for which you hunger and long? What would support you in this new direction?



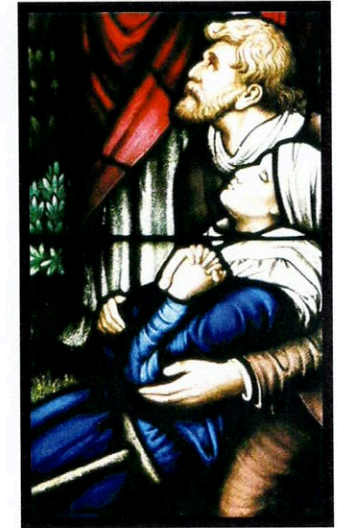
HISTORY AND DESIGN

This window, done in a style known as "Contemporary Traditional," was dedicated to the memory of Marjorie Ethel Stokes, in 1957.

THIRTEENTH WINDOW



"Jesus Heals. Letting Go."



Some of the broken people come to Jesus. The healing he gives changes them. Many stories tell of their eagerness, and their ability to change others by their testimony. We might need to be healed too. When we long to make a difference in our world, and even when we have the will to act on it, parts of our selves can hold us back. Memories, habits, wounds. What holds you back?

Here Jesus heals all kinds of brokenness. Consider how you could cooperate with the healing Jesus gives. How can you become free to fully approach life?



HISTORY AND DESIGN

This N.T. Lyon window was dedicated to the memory of Doctor Richard Rutt Hopkins, by his sons, in 1930. The Mary and Martha window (directly opposite) was dedicated to Mrs. R.R. Hopkins.

FOURTEENTH WINDOW



"Resurrection. Your New Life."



These people were not expecting what is happening to them. They were frightened, but they were soon to become great risk takers. They changed history. The unexpected isn't neat and tidy; it might even feel chaotic and risky.

This whole journey is about having a new life, an abundant life, a renewed life. We die to old things. This window, and the colours drawn from it and applied to the walls, tells us to be Easter people. Our renewed life may be unexpected. It may disrupt our best-laid plans. In the flash of light in this window, here is your new life, if you are ready to take it up.



HISTORY AND DESIGN

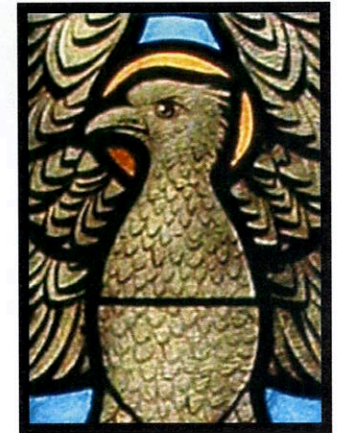
This Robert McCausland window was dedicated in 1943 to the memory of Dr. William H. Dixon (1858-1918) and his wife, Sara Ann Mathews (1861-1943). The biblical quote is not from the resurrection accounts in the gospels, but rather from the Song of Songs: "Until the day break and the shadows flee away, turn, my beloved, and be thou like a roe or young hart upon the mountain of Bethel." (2:17)

FIFTEENTH WINDOW



"The Rising Eagle. What I stand for."

The eagle is the symbol of the Evangelist John, writer of the Gospel of John, for whom this church is named. What if the peculiar words are acronyms, short forms to designate values? For example, what if "Trufalo" indicates truth, faith, and love? As you prepare to go on your way, more aware of the grace of a special way of living your life, check in with your core values. What are they? What acronym can you make for your most closely held principles?



HISTORY AND DESIGN

This window, by Robert McCausland, was dedicated to the five bible classes that were conducted at St. John's between 1919 and 1947. These classes were the Bula Mutadi Boys' Bible Class, the Kiselo Girls' Bible Class, the Alert Young Men's Bible Class, the Apex Boys' Bible Class and the Trinity Girls' Bible Class.

SIXTEENTH WINDOW

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"The Light of the World. An Open Door."



Jesus stands at the door and knocks. Notice that it is very desolate outside the door. The overgrowth of thistles and a door with no handle provide all kinds of self-protection. The door can only be opened from the inside. Jesus does not actually open the door. It is your life. What doors in your life are truly closed? What new doors have you noticed? Have you heard any knocking? What is to be decided about your hunger for rightness in the world, and your role in bringing it about?

The blank space to the right is for you. It is for the response coming from inside you. How have you received the grace you asked at the beginning of the window-walk? What significant new awareness do you have? What door is opening? With this blank space, come out of contemplation, and take with you what you received as a gift from God. Amen.

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HISTORY AND DESIGN

This Robert McCausland design is dedicated to the memory of Hugh Percy Harrison (1899-1932). It is based on the famous painting, "The Light of the World," by the British artist William Holman Hunt (1827-1910). Hunt painted this work between 1851 and 1853, in an attempt to communicate his own religious questionings. He wanted to break free of existing iconographic traditions, and to create a natural symbolism that would be immediately comprehensible to any audience. Every element of the painting is symbolic, as explained by Hunt:

The closed door was the obstinately shut mind, the weeds the cumber of daily neglect, the accumulated hindrances of sloth; the orchard the garden of delectable fruit for the dainty feast of the soul. The music of the still small voice was the summons to the sluggard to awaken and become a zealous labourer under the Divine Master;

the bat flitting about only in the darkness was a natural symbol of ignorance; the kingly and priestly dress of Christ, the sign of His reign over the body and the soul, to them who could give their allegiance to Him and acknowledge God's overrule. In making it a night scene, lit mainly by the lantern carried by Christ, I have followed the metaphorical explanation in the Psalms, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path," with also the accordant allusions by St. Paul to the sleeping soul, "The night is far spent, the day is at hand."

Response to his painting convinced Hunt that his method was successful. It was widely imitated by other painters, and its ideas incorporated into poems and hymns. It is included in the stained glass windows of many churches. The original painting is on display at Keble College, Oxford.

THE WINDOWS OF ST. JOHN'S CHURCH



We hope this tour has been an enriching experience. These windows are a great spiritual resource to our whole West Toronto community. As we begin the task of restoring the windows, we ask your support. The cost is high. It is estimated that to restore the window most in need of repair (Mary and Martha) would cost between \$7500 and \$9000. The cost of repairing the exterior of each window (cleaning, new vandal-proof thermal exterior glass, and frame repair and repainting) is approximately \$2500 per window. However, the windows are beautiful and irreplaceable. Thank you for sharing your life with the community at St. John's. We welcome you to worship with us. We invite you to visit and walk through our open windows again.



THE PEOPLE OF ST. JOHN'S CHURCH, WEST TORONTO

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